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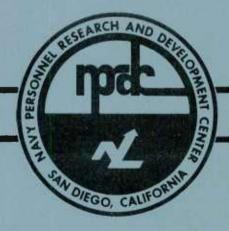
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THE REALLOCATION OF MILITARY PAY INCREASES

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NAVY PERSONNEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER San Diego, California 92152



NPRDC TR 82-49 June 1982

## THE REALLOCATION OF MILITARY PAY INCREASES

Walter W. Wilcox

Reviewed by Murray Rowe

Released by James F. Kelly, Jr. Commanding Officer

#### **FOREWORD**

This research and development effort was conducted in response to Navy Decision Coordinating Paper Z1182-PN (Military Personnel Cost Projection), subproject PN.03 (Compensation and Incentives for Military Force Management). It was sponsored by the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (OP-01).

The object of this subproject is to develop techniques, analyses, and procedures that will permit Navy personnel managers to make knowledgeable assessments of the cost and retention consequences of existing and/or proposed compensation policies. The objective of the effort described herein was to evaluate the scope and limitations of military pay reallocation mechanisms through the use of a computer-based model called REALL. This model estimates the pay rate and budgetary implications of various pay increase and reallocation scenarios.

JAMES F. KELLY, JR. Commanding Officer

JAMES J. REGAN Technical Director

#### SUMMARY

# Problem

Current law provides several administrative mechanisms for manipulating the overall size of relative distribution of military pay increases. Among these are reallocation of pay increases to basic allowance for subsistence (BAS), basic allowance for quarters (BAQ), or selected pay grades and pay targeting.

Pay reallocation can have a profound effect on the shape of the overall military compensation package, as well as on Navy, DoD, and federal budgets. To better understand the impact of reallocation on pay rates and budgets, NAVPERSRANDCEN has constructed a computer-based model, called REALL.

## Purpose

The objective of this effort was to assess the power, scope, and limitations of pay reallocation mechanisms using REALL.

## Approach

The long-term and immediate impact of various types of basic pay reallocation on pay rates and budgetary costs were examined. The current basic pay resulting from the FY77 and FY78 reallocations to BAQ and the FY82 pay grade targeting were contrasted to estimates derived from simple, across-the-board, nonreallocated pay increases. In addition, the estimated effect of reallocation on the take-home pay of typical personnel was examined by simulating various combinations of percentage pay increases and reallocation scenarios through the use of the REALL model. A similar exercise was performed for costs with particular emphasis on "drag along" cost elements.

# **Findings**

- 1. Prior to the FY82 targeted pay increase, reallocation had caused basic pay in all pay grades to lag behind what it would have been without reallocation. Pay targeting in FY82 either increased or decreased the gap, depending upon the specific pay grade.
- 2. Because different proportions of each pay grade draw BAQ and/or BAS, any reallocation plan will cause pay raises to differ substantially among pay grades. When reallocating to BAS, lower enlisted pay grades suffer the most while lower officer pay grades receive the highest percentage increases.
- 3. When pay grade reallocation is implemented, sizable pay raise differences occur, depending on the number of pay grades selected for a differential raise and the grade level. In such cases, the higher the pay grade or the fewer number of pay grades selected, the greater the resulting pay increases.
- 4. Compensation elements directly related to basic pay will also be increased when a pay raise is instituted. An example would be the amount an individual receives for a selective reenlistment bonus (SRB). If a pay increase is reallocated (from basic pay), the increase in basic-pay-related elements is reduced proportionally.
- 5. The cost incurred by the government as a result of reallocation is dependent on the size of the pay increase, the type of reallocation, and the extent of reallocation. The cost to an individual service or DoD is, in addition, increased by "drag along" costs that

increase proportionally with basic military compensation (BMC). Such outlays add about 20 percent of BMC to the overall cost.

- 6. Because some personnel do not draw BAS or BAQ, increases in service costs are generally less than pay increase percentages, especially when increases are reallocated. For example, if 25 percent of a 10 percent increase were reallocated to BAS, the total cost to the Navy would be raised by only 8.99 percent.
- 7. When the FY77 and FY78 reallocations are expressed in terms of total government costs over the 5-year period from FY77 to FY78 and contrasted to estimates of nonreallocated, across-the-board pay increases, a savings of roughly \$998 million in BMC and related items results.

### Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that reallocation has a sustained and significant effect on both government costs and individual pay. Although enacted to accomplish certain goals, the long-term impact of reallocation may conflict with those initial objectives.

Because it provides the most flexibility with the least "side effects," pay targeting is likely to become the method selected most often in the future when other-than-equal pay raises are required.

# CONTENTS

		Page
INT	RODUCTION	1
P	Problem and Background	1 2
APF	PROACH	3
RES	SULTS	3
R B	Reallocation and Member Pay Rates	3 6
COI	NCLUSIONS	8
	TRIBUTION LIST	
	LIST OF TABLES	
1.	Percentage Increases in Basic Pay Resulting From FY82 Pay Grade Targeting	2
2.	Average Cash Pay Raise Under 25% Reallocation (Based on 10% Increase in FY81 Pay Rates)	4
3.	Effects of Pay Grade Reallocation to One or More Pay Grades (10% Increase in FY81 Rates W/25% Pay Grade Reallocation)	5
4.	Effects of Reallocation on the Selective Reenlistment Bonus (For E-4 W/Over 3 Years of Service)	6
	"Drag Along" Costs	
6.	Estimated Cost to the Navy of a Reallocated and Nonreallocated 10% Pay Raise (Based on FY81 Pay Rates)	7
7.	Savings Attributable to FY77 and FY78 Pay Reallocations (Millions of FY81 Dollars	8

#### INTRODUCTION

# Problem and Background

Under current law, there are several administrative mechanisms available for the manipulation of either the overall size or the relative distribution of military pay increases. These mechanisms were authorized to give the Executive Branch more flexibility in managing its economic and manpower programs. One method, used primarily for fiscal restraint, is the reduction or "capping" of a pay raise intended to maintain comparability with civilian wages. The President "capped" both military and federal civilian pay increases in 1975, 1978, and 1979. In contrast, other methods, such as pay reallocation and pay targeting, are considered more useful as force management tools.

The DoD Authorizations Act of 1977 (PL 94-361) authorized the President to redistribute up to 25 percent of the annual increase in military basic pay into either the basic allowance for quarters (BAQ), the basic allowance for subsistence (BAS), or both. Additionally, the 1981 Defense Authorizations Act permits the President to reallocate up to 25 percent of a pay raise to one or more selected pay grades. Finally, Congress may simply elect to fund differential pay raises by pay grade. The latter mechanism is frequently called "pay targeting."

The BAQ and BAS reallocation options were provided as a means of distributing pay increases to those basic military compensation (BMC) components in roughly the same proportion as the expenses they are intended to cover. For example, this authority could be conceived as a means of allocating portions of annual basic pay increases into BAQ to more nearly approximate the average fair market rental value of government quarters.

Both pay grade reallocation and pay targeting options are intended primarily as methods for shaping the officer and enlisted forces. For example, basic pay dollars may be redistributed so that pay grades with retention problems receive larger prcentage pay increases than do those grades that are considered adequately manned. However, because pay targeting permits differential increases by pay grade, it is considered a superior tool for relieving compression in the pay tables.

On two occasions, the President has exercised his authority to reallocate to BAQ. In FY77, 25 percent of what would have been a 4.85 percent increase in basic pay was reallocated. In FY78, 12 percent of a 7.05 percent raise went to BAQ. The pay grade reallocation feature has never been used. However, in FY82, Congress did "target" differential pay increases to enlisted pay grades. Those increases are listed by pay grade in Table 1.

The use of the reallocation or targeting options can have a profound effect on the shape of the overall military compensation package, as well as on the Navy, DoD, and federal government budgets. The BAQ/BAS reallocation process, like pay capping, generates substantial short-term savings for the government, but only at the expense of reduced cash compensation for service members. The transfer of members' basic pay

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>When part of the pay raise is reallocated to one or more selected pay grades, each of those grades share equally; that is, they all get the same percentage raise, albeit larger than the nonselected grades. This differs from pay targeting, where percentage pay raises can differ across grades.

Percentage Increases in Basic Pay Resulting
From FY82 Pay Grade Targeting

Pay Grade	Percentage Increase
E-1	10.0
E-2	10.7
E-3	10.7
E-4	13.0
E-5	16.5
E-6	16.5
E-7	17.0
E-8	17.0
E-9	17.0
All officers	14.3

Note. A conventional, across-the-board increase in FY82 would have resulted in a 14.3 percent raise for all officer and enlisted personnel.

dollars into BAQ serves to dampen the growth of, or actually reduce, many compensation elements tied to or "dragged along" by either basic pay or BAQ. For example, reduced basic pay increases also means reduced selective reenlistment bonuses (SRBs), lower reserve drill pay, smaller severance payments, lower social security contributions (and hence reduced coverage), and lower future retirement pay and survivor benefits. Moreover, placing some of the basic pay dollars into BAQ means that occupants of on-base housing, who forfeit BAQ, lose part of their basic pay increase, while paying higher BAQ "rents."

Similarly, although two different pay grade reallocation schemes may have the same basic pay cost, they could produce substantially different "drag along" obligations, depending on which pay grades receive the larger pay raises.

To better understand the impact of reallocation and targeting on the pay of individuals and military personnel budgets, the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center has constructed a computer-based model, called REALL, to estimate the pay rate and cost implications of pay increase and reallocation scenarios. The REALL model has been used by the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, and Training) to evaluate pay raise plans posed by Congress, DoD, and the Navy itself.

## Objective

The objective of this effort was to evaluate the scopes and limitations of pay reallocation mechanisms using the REALL model as an analytic tool.

#### **APPROACH**

The long-term and immediate impact of various types of basic pay reallocation on pay rates and budgetary costs were examined. The current basic pay resulting from the FY77 and FY78 reallocations to BAQ and the FY82 pay grade targeting were contrasted to estimates derived from simple, across-the-board, nonreallocated pay increases. In addition, the estimated effect of reallocation on the take-home pay of typical personnel was examined by simulating various combinations of percentage pay increases and reallocation scenarios through the use of the REALL model. A similar exercise was performed for costs with particular emphasis on "drag along" cost elements.

#### **RESULTS**

## Reallocation and Member Pay Rates

Figure 1 displays the results of comparing the actual basic pay that resulted from the FY77 and FY78 reallocations (to BAQ) and the FY82 pay grade targeting to estimates of pay rates that would have derived from simple, across-the-board, nonreallocated pay increases. Prior to the FY82 targeted pay raise, the two reallocations to BAQ had caused basic pay in all pay grades to lag behind what it would have been without the

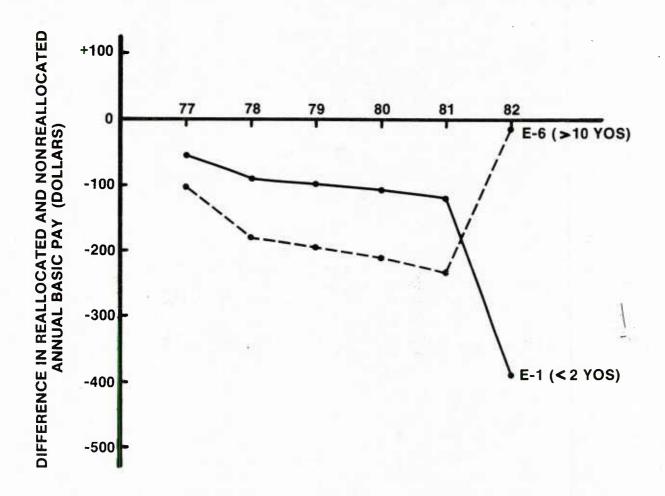


Figure 1. Comparison of reallocated (actual) and nonreallocated (estimated) annual basic pay for selected pay grades, FY77-82.

reallocations. For example, in FY81, the annual basic pay of a typical E-6 (more than 10 years of service) was over \$230 less than it would have been. Moreover, an E-6 living on base and hence not drawing cash allowances would have suffered approximately a \$900 cumulative loss in pay over the 5 years (FY77-81) due to reallocation.

Depending on the pay grade, the FY82 pay targeting either exaggerated or diminished the previous trends. In those pay grades that receive less than what otherwise would have been an across-the-board 14.3 percent increase (e.g., E-1s got only a 10 percent raise), the gap between reallocated and nonreallocated pay widened further. In contrast, the targeting of additional pay to other pay grades (e.g., E-6s received 16.5 percent) had the effect of virtually restoring basic pay to what it would have been without the earlier reallocations.

Because substantially different proportions of each pay grade draw the BAQ and/or BAS allowances, the impact of any reallocation plan will result in notably different realized pay increases for various pay grades. Table 2 displays what a 10 percent pay raise means to "typical" personnel from assorted pay grades when 25 percent of the raise is reallocated to either BAQ or BAS.<sup>2</sup> When reallocating pay to BAS, lower enlisted pay grades suffer the most while lower officer pay grades actually realize gains greater than 10 percent. These apparent inequities are a function of the portion of a pay grade not drawing cash allowances, as well as the size of allowances relative to basic pay. All officers receive a single BAS allowance regardless of pay grade. For a junior officer earning perhaps one half that of a senior officer, BAS constitutes a greater proportion of overall pay. As a result, a reallocated increase in BAS will produce a larger increase in overall pay for the junior officer. Because lower grade enlisted personnel tend to live on base and receive in-kind subsistence vice BAS, a reallocation to BAS serves only to subtract from their basic pay raise and, in turn, their overall pay increase. In comparison, reallocation to BAQ produces much less variation among pay grades since the size of BAQ payments is an increasing function of pay grade.

Table 2

Average Cash Pay Raise Under 25% Reallocation (Based on 10% Increase in FY81 Pay Rates)

Pay Grade	No Reallo- cation (%)	Reallocation to BAQ (%)	Reallocation to BAS (%)	
E-1	9.88	9.77	7.67	
E-4	9.94	9.63	8.78	
E-6	9.99	9.27	9.38	
O-1	9.98	9.68	11.61	
O-3	9.99	9.56	10.00	
0-5	10.00	9.57	9.36	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The pay increases in Table 2 represent weighted average pay raises for each pay grade. The weights represent the proportion of each pay grade drawing (1) both "full or partial BAQ" and BAS, (2) either "full or partial BAQ" or BAS but not both, or (3) no cash allowances.

Pay raises also differ substantially among pay grades when there is pay grade reallocation or targeting. Reallocation to pay grades means that a specified portion of the proposed pay increase is transferred from nonselected pay grades to those designated for a differential increase. The designated grades all share equal percentage increases. This implies that the number of designated pay grades affects the ultimate size of the differential raise.

When only one pay grade is selected, the members in that grade receive the entire reallocated portion of basic pay. Alternatively, when several pay grades are designated, they all realize lesser amounts. Table 3 illustrates what these differences can mean for a typical pay raise. Note that, when pay is reallocated to a single pay grade, higher pay grades receive larger percentage increases since there are fewer people to share the redistributed dollars.

Table 3

Effects of Pay Grade Reallocation to One or More Pay Grades (10% Increase in FY81 Rates W/25% Pay Grade Reallocation)

Pay Grade	Reallocated to Single Pay Grade (%)	Reallocated to All Three Pay Grades (%)	
E-4 (> 3)	19.30	11.94	
E-5 (> 6)	20.11	11.94	
E-6 (> 10)	23.85	11.94	

If a pay increase is reallocated to BAQ or BAS, the increase in other compensation elements directly related to basic pay will be less than if there had been no reallocation. For example, a 25 percent BAQ/BAS reallocation will mean a 25 percent reduction in the increase to SRBs. This effect is depicted in Table 4 for an E-4 with over 3 years of service, reenlisting for 4 years. It is assumed that the member is eligible for a Zone A SRB award level of 4. Using FY81 pay rates as a baseline, the reallocation of a quarter of a 10 percent pay raise to BAQ or BAS would provide this individual with an SRB of roughly \$270 less than if the pay raise had not been reallocated. Clearly, a similar effect occurs if a pay grade receives less of an increase because of pay grade reallocation or pay targeting. Conversely, those pay grades that benefit from pay grade reallocation or targeting through otherwise larger raises also benefit from larger than anticipated SRB awards.

Table 4

Effect of Reallocation on the Selective Reenlistment Bonus
(for E-4 W/Over 3 Years of Service)

Pay Raise Scenario	FY81 Basic Pay (Monthly)	Years on Reenlistment Contract	Award Level	SRB Award
No increase	\$674.70	4.0	4	\$10,795
10% unreallocated	742.20	4.0	4	11,875
10% w/25% reallocation	725.40	4.0	4	11,606

## Budgetary Implications of Reallocation

The budgetary costs incurred by the government as a result of reallocation are dependent on (1) the size of the pay increase, (2) the type of reallocation or targeting, and (3) the extent of the reallocation. When pay is increased (whether reallocated or not), the additional cost to an individual service or to DoD is not confined to the cost of the BMC items but, instead, is a combination of BMC and its associated "drag along" costs. A list of the "drag along" cost components appears in Table 5. These outlays, which increase proportionally with BMC, especially basic pay, are significant. Put in perspective, in FY82, a \$1.00 increase in BMC automatically brought with it an additional \$0.20 in related costs.

Table 5
"Drag Along" Costs

RMC Element	Associated Cost Element		
Basic pay	FICA Selective reenlistment bonus Continuation pay Cadets/midshipmen pay Reserve drill pay Retirement pay (DoD only)		
BAQ	Dislocation allowance Family separation allowance		
BAS	None		

Table 6 exhibits the differences in direct and "drag along" costs between a reallocated and nonreallocated 10 percent pay raise. Because some personnel do not draw BAQ and/or BAS, a 10 percent "across-the-board" or nonreallocated pay increase caused Navy costs to rise by only 9.94 percent. When 25 percent of the basic pay increase is redistributed to BAQ, the Navy realizes a savings. Since non-BAQ recipients receive a pay increase less than 10 percent, the result is a budget increase of only 9.25 percent. The savings are even greater on a reallocation to BAS. Because BAS has no associated "drag along" costs, total costs rise by only 8.99 percent. Services with larger proportions of in-kind recipients would realize even larger savings.

Table 6

Estimated Cost to the Navy of a Reallocated and Nonreallocated 10%
Pay Raise (Based on FY81 Pay Rates)
(Millions of Dollars)

Cost Element	Nonreallocated	25% Reallocated to BAQ	25% Reallocated to BAS	
Direct BMC items (Basic pay, BAQ, BAS)	\$7,479.75	\$7,455.27	\$7,430.76	
Drag along costs	808.12	794.57	790.47	
Social security tax (FICA)	412.22	403.41	403.14	
Total 8,700.09		8,653.25	8,624.37	
Percent increase in Navy budgetary costs	9.94	9.35	8.99	

The budgets of the Navy, DoD, and the federal government are each impacted differently by reallocation. The costs can be portrayed as either strict budget outlays or economic costs. The latter is an estimation of foregone opportunities, such as lost income tax revenues. Because DoD absorbs the cost of retirement benefits, its budgetary costs are distinct from those of the Navy. Meanwhile, the U.S. government's general fund indirectly reflects the cost of foregone tax revenues that result from reallocation of earnings from taxable (basic pay) to nontaxable (BAQ, BAS) compensation elements.

Table 7 indicates that long-term compensation costs have actually been reduced by reallocations beginning in FY77. All military members receive basic pay, but a significant portion do not draw BAQ payment. The redistribution of part of the FY77 and FY78 pay increases out of basic pay to BAQ produced roughly a \$998 million (FY81 dollars) savings in BMC and related items over the 5-year period from FY77-81. Because retirement pay is based on basic pay at time of retirement, the smaller increases in basic pay stemming from the reallocations provided in additional savings of nearly \$42 million (FY81 dollars). However, since BAQ is a nontaxable allowance, the reallocation led to a 5-year income tax forteiture of approximately \$461 million (FY81 dollars). The net effect of the two reallocations through FY81 was a savings to the government of \$578 million (FY81 dollars).

Table 7
Savings Attributed to FY77 and FY78 Pay Reallocations (Millions of FY81 Dollars)

Cost Element	FY77	FY78	FY79	FY80	FY81
Direct BMC items, drag alongs, and FICA	\$130.9	\$222.5	\$215.0	\$208.8	\$220.4
Retirement	5.8	9.7	9.2	8.6	8.8
Tax revenues	-59.6	-103.1	-100.0	-97.1	-101.6
Net savings	77.1	129.1	124.2	120.3	127.6
Cumulative savings	77.1	206.2	330.4	450.7	578.3

#### CONCLUSIONS

It has been demonstrated that reallocation has a sustained and significant effect on both government costs and individual pay checks. Although enacted to accomplish certain goals, the long-term impact of reallocation may conflict with those initial objectives. Pay increases are primarily intended to maintain or enhance retention and aid recruitment. However, it has been shown that reallocation of pay increases to BAQ can cause some members to lose substantial amounts of basic pay and bonus dollars over a period of years.

Because it provides the most flexibility with the least "side effects," pay targeting is a more appropriate approach when an other-than-equal pay raise is required.

#### **DISTRIBUTION**

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